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## Hermod Bakke

Born: 1902    Died: ?

*Hermod Bakke, an excellent cross- country skier and jumper, was best known as a “doer.” He was a hill designer and tireless worker for his sport.*

Hermod Bakke immigrated to the United States from Norway in 1928, becoming a citizen in 1933. He was 26 years old when he came to this country, but did not reach his potential in ski jumping until he had been in this country for a couple of years, attaining Class “A” status in 1931. Hermod peaked in 1935 at age 33 during the Olympic trials at Salt Lake City, but a fall on one jump automatically disqualified him from making the 1936 Winter Olympic Team for his adopted country.

Bakke was also an excellent cross-country skier and competed in both cross-country and jumping events for several years. He promoted his sport in every way he could.

Hermod was a good athlete, but he was also well known, perhaps better known as a tireless worker and hill

designer. He was, in a word, a “doer.” In

1933, Hermod redesigned the big hill at Leavenworth, Washington, and he helped design and build the hill at Government Camp, Oregon. On the Leavenworth project, Hermod worked day and night for two days of back breaking work to prepare the hill, and then jumped at the Leavenworth meet the next day. That was the kind of man Hermod was! In many cases he unselfishly worked day and night, so others would have a perfect hill on which to jump. Hermod also organized and trained youngsters, or anyone else who asked for help, always stressing safety.

In 1950, Hermod again undertook a massive project on Leavenworth Hill, making it possible for 300-foot jumps. This involved cutting away dirt and rock, much of it done personally, and all of it under his direct supervision, making the Leavenworth Hill one of the best in North America. Much of his labors were not news in the sense that record-breaking jumps would be, but Hermod was the man to thank that the hill was in condition to make the jump on tournament day. A mainstay of the Leavenworth Club, his efforts did not go unnoticed or unappreciated by the club. A permanent trophy was presented to the Bakke Brothers, Hermod and Magnus. It is 54 inches high and remains permanently in the Leavenworth Ski Club. A replica is presented annually to the winner of the Junior Expert Class at Leavenworth Tournament. The hills at Leavenworth are now named “Bakke Hills.” This is quite an honor, and a well-deserved one at that.

Hermod Bakke was hill captain or tournament chairman from 1932 through 1969. A tireless worker, he thrived on the satisfaction of a job well done, knowing that through his efforts, the Leavenworth Tournaments on Bakke Hill were excellent. He knew that through his efforts, ski jumping progressed into a spectacular, but relatively safe sport. Safety was always his foremost concern. Skiing can use as many Hermod Bakke’s as they can find.

Hermod Bakke was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1972.

